

Crop Conditions as of July 16, 2009

With the exception of the central areas in the Peace Region, the province has received significant precipitation during the last two weeks, mostly ranging from 20 to 70 millimetres (mm). As a result, crop conditions have improved, particularly for the late seeded crops. For the early seeded cereals which have already headed out, the recent rainfall will help fill out these crops, but yield potentials are unlikely to improve. The moisture has also caused second growth, and another round of seed germination in the North East Region and eastern parts of the Central Region. This has resulted in multiple stages of crop development in the field. For the newly emerged crops, a long, warm, and frost-free fall will be needed to reach maturity.

Temperatures during the last two weeks have been 1-3 degrees below the seasonal average. Overall, crop development in most areas of the province is 10-15 days behind normal. Spring cereals are mostly heading out, and crop stands are significantly shorter than in most years. Canola development ranges from rosette to early podding, with most in the flowering stage. Also, many areas have reported some crop damage from hailstorms. Shown in Table 1 below are the estimates of crop conditions in Alberta.

Despite the recent rainfall, the lack of moisture remains a concern, particularly at the sub-surface level. Provincially, surface moisture is rated as 26 per cent poor, 43 per cent fair, 25 per cent good, and six per cent excellent. Table 2 below provides estimates of sub-surface moisture conditions in Alberta.

First cut haying operations are underway, with nearly 30 per cent complete on dryland and 75 per cent under irrigation. Hay yields are well below average for dryland, and near average under irrigation. With respect to quality, about 50 per cent of dryland hay and 70 per cent of irrigated hay are rated as good or excellent. For hay still lying in the field, quality is likely to deteriorate, due to the recent rainfall. Some hay fields are being used for cattle grazing, particularly in the North East Region and eastern parts of the Central Region, where hay production this year is expected to be well below average.

The recent improvement in pasture growth has allowed for more cattle grazing. For most areas of the North East Region and eastern parts of the Central Region, pasture is turning green, but growth has been minimal. Provincially, pasture conditions are rated as 58 per cent poor, 34 per cent fair, and eight per cent good. Producers are spraying to control grasshopper infestations in some areas of the Peace, and North East Regions. Other pest problems reported in the province include root maggots, lygus bugs, army cutworms, and gophers.

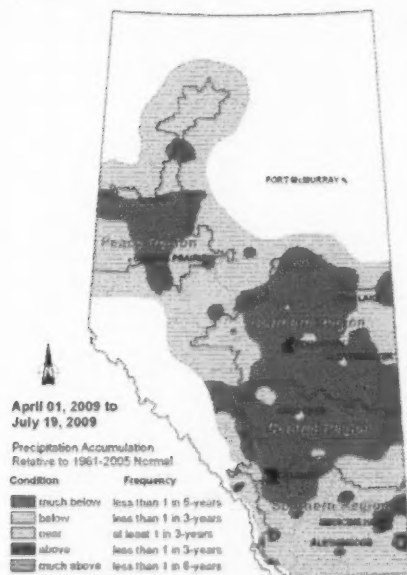


Table 1: Estimates of Crop Conditions, Alberta

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Total
Spring Wheat	33%	44%	22%	1%	100%
Durum Wheat	31%	40%	27%	2%	100%
Oats	31%	46%	22%	1%	100%
Barley	33%	44%	22%	1%	100%
Canola	39%	40%	20%	1%	100%
Dry Peas	34%	45%	20%	1%	100%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Table 2: Estimates of Sub-Surface Moisture Conditions, Alberta

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Total
South	17%	29%	35%	19%	100%
Central	45%	37%	17%	1%	100%
North East	70%	21%	9%	0%	100%
North West	65%	27%	8%	0%	100%
Peace	70%	26%	4%	0%	100%
Alberta	53%	28%	15%	4%	100%

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2009 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- The region has received significant precipitation during the last two weeks, mostly ranging from 40 to 90 mm. As a result, soil moisture conditions have improved. Overall, surface moisture is reported as four per cent poor, 21 per cent fair, 47 per cent good, and 28 per cent excellent, while the rating of sub-surface moisture is 17 per cent poor, 29 per cent fair, 35 per cent good, and 19 per cent excellent.
- With respect to crop conditions, spring cereals are rated as ten per cent poor, 45 per cent fair, 45 per cent good or excellent, while canola is reported as 20 per cent poor, 48 per cent fair, and 32 per cent good or excellent. Specialty crops are mostly in fair to good condition. Overall, crop development remains 10-15 days behind most years. Hailstorms have caused crop damage in some areas.
- First cut haying operations are 55 per cent completed on dryland and 85 per cent under irrigation. Overall, pasture is rated as 39 per cent poor, 39 per cent fair, and 22 per cent good or excellent.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- The recent rainfall (25-80 mm in most areas) has brought much needed moisture to the region. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 22 per cent poor, 50 per cent fair, and 28 per cent good or excellent, while the sub-surface moisture is reported as 45 per cent poor, 37 per cent fair, and 18 per cent good or excellent.
- Crops are showing some improvement in growth. Overall, spring cereals are rated as 50 per cent poor, 42 per cent fair, and eight per cent good, while canola is reported as 50 per cent poor, 37 per cent fair, and 13 per cent good. The recent rainfall has resulted in some seed germination in eastern parts of the region.
- First cut haying operations are estimated at 50 per cent complete, with yields significantly below average. Pasture is reported as 64 per cent poor, 28 per cent fair, and eight per cent good.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- The region has received significant precipitation during the last two weeks, mostly ranging from 30 to 80 mm. Despite the moisture received, dry conditions remain a concern, particularly at the sub-surface level. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 17 per cent poor, 64 per cent fair, and 19 per cent good, while the sub-surface moisture is reported as 70 per cent poor, 21 per cent fair, and nine per cent good.
- The recent rainfall has caused second growth and another round of seed germination, resulting in multiple stages of crop development in the field. With respect to crop conditions, spring cereals are rated as 35 per cent poor, 52 per cent fair, and 13 per cent good, while canola is reported as 44 per cent poor, 48 per cent fair, and eight per cent good. Also reported are spraying for grasshoppers, and some frost in early July.
- Some producers have started the first cut haying operation, and yields are generally very low. Pasture is rated as 76 per cent poor, and 24 per cent fair.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- The region has received significant precipitation during the last two weeks, mostly ranging from 20 to 60 mm. Despite the recent rainfall, the lack of moisture remains a concern, especially at the sub-surface level.
- Crop development remains 10-15 days behind normal. With respect to crop conditions, spring cereals are rated as 45 per cent poor, 45 per cent fair, and ten per cent good, with a lower rating reported for canola. Some canola fields are being reseeded to cereals, for forage production. Hailstorms have caused some crop damage, and frost has occurred in some areas.
- Due to the recent rainfall, pasture and tame hay conditions are improving, although most are still rated as poor to fair. Some producers have started the first cut haying operation, and yields are very low.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- Rain showers have brought significant precipitation to the southern and northern parts of the region, while only limited rainfall is reported in the central areas of the region. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 37 per cent poor, 32 per cent fair, 27 per cent good, and four per cent excellent, while the sub-surface moisture is reported as 70 per cent poor, 26 per cent fair, and four per cent good. Also reported are some crop damage from hailstorms, as well as grasshopper infestations in some areas.
- Crop development remains 10-15 days behind normal. With respect to crop conditions, spring wheat is rated as 21 per cent poor, 38 per cent fair, 39 per cent good, and two per cent excellent, while canola is reported as 16 per cent poor, 30 per cent fair, 51 per cent good, and three per cent excellent.
- First cut haying operations have just started. Pasture conditions are rated as 59 per cent poor, 35 per cent fair, and six per cent good.

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